

The Alliance Herald

TUESDAY AND FRIDAY

BURR PRINTING CO., Owners

Entered at the postoffice at Alliance, Neb., for transportation through the mails as second class matter.

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Official newspaper of the City of Alliance; official newspaper of Box Butte County.

Owned and published by The Burr Printing Company, George L. Burr, Jr., President; Edwin M. Burr, Vice President.

KICKING OVER THE TRACES.

A special session of the legislature is attended by the same risk to the public and to the political leaders as a regular session, it appears. Now, a special session is called to consider certain definite subjects, and according to Hoyle, is supposed to confine its deliberations to the subjects mentioned in the call. A regular session of the solons has no metes or bounds, as may be seen by the mess of legislation that comes out of the mill. The present special session shows signs of kicking over the traces, and all the king's horses and all the king's men can't seem to keep them going straight.

In his opening message, Governor McKelvie laid out a definite program for the solons. He told them exactly how much to lop off of the appropriations; what bills to consider and even went so far as to have the bills prepared, so the legislators had nothing to do but pass them and go home. The governor thought five days a sufficient time to do what work there was to be done. Unfortunately, or otherwise, the legislators seem to think differently. It may not be their show, but they are running it.

The limitation of subjects in the call doesn't seem to worry them at all. Both houses of the legislature have decided to investigate the state highway department. Both houses have made the salary appropriations for themselves large enough to take care of a session longer than the five days suggested by Mr. McKelvie. The appropriations were reduced, all right, but the legislators changed the lineup so carefully prepared by the governor and Phil Bross, the state's financial wizard.

The governor had requested that the appropriation for the state highway department be diminished by a certain large sum, provided the gasoline tax were enacted. The object of the tax was to furnish money with which to match federal appropriations. The legislators have cut down the appropriation as requested, but have resolved against federal aid, and unless strenuous efforts now being made are successful, will refuse to enact the gasoline tax.

And this isn't all. One or both houses have been passing resolutions on a lot of subjects that they are not supposed to resolve about. Thus, one house has gone on record against cancelling the debt of the allied nations. Another resolution strikes at the Northwestern Bell Telephone company and recommends that the state railway commission refuse the application for increased rates, now before it. The legislators have also considered other forbidden subjects.

Something is wrong with the steering gear. The governor's friends are quite ready to frame up arguments as to why the solons are acting in such an unheard of manner, and most of these explanations are worded so that they save Mr. McKelvie's face. There is a ready explanation for every unexpected action that has been taken, but there is a growing suspicion among the democratic brethren that perhaps Governor McKelvie will regret his rashness in insisting upon a special session when public opinion was so overwhelmingly opposed to it.

COMPARATIVE ROAD COSTS.

The Box Butte county commissioners have officially joined in the outcry against the state highway department, and its chief prophet, State Engineer George E. Johnson. The complaint against the methods of Mr. Johnson and his satellites is quite general over the state, Cherry and Sherman county officials having opened the attack. Both of these are staying with it, despite the fact that Mr. Johnson has issued an answer in which he apparently convinces himself that they were all wrong.

Commissioner Carrell, in a statement to the citizens of the county and the public in general, reviews the state aid road situation in Box Butte county. He says that there is still \$48,370 of federal aid funds available for use in this county, but that although two routes have been designated, one of which was approved by Division Engineer McLean, it has been impossible to get the state department to approve either route, nor have they shown a disposition to suggest other routes. The money must be used this year, or Box Butte county loses it.

Mr. Carrell gives figures on the construction of the seven-mile strip of the Potash highway, which show that it cost this county, in state and federal aid funds, over \$4,000 per mile. The Chadron highway, built by Box Butte county at the same time from county funds, and later accepted as a state aid road, cost but \$104 per mile.

The figures on road maintenance are equally illuminating. In 1921, the maintenance of the seven miles of Potash Highway, under the direction of state department officials, amounted to \$328 a mile. The Chadron road, which was built at a cost of \$104 a mile, was maintained only at a cost of \$188.90 a mile under the efficient state supervision.

In comparison with these maintenance figures, Mr. Carrell shows that the Alliance-Hemingford road, known as the Hashman road, was both built and maintained during the past year at a cost \$368.35 less than the maintenance cost alone for the Chadron road, the same length. The only difference was that in the case of the Chadron road, the state officials were spending the money; in the case of the Hashman road, the money was spent under county supervision.

Mr. Carrell makes the important point that the money spent on the seven miles of the Potash highway, exclusive of maintenance, if expended by the county authorities, would have constructed over three hundred miles of good road for Box Butte county, instead of the seven miles of comparatively poor road.

Mr. Carrell's figures are worth careful consideration. They show that in building certain roads, at least, the county commissioners have spent money more carefully than the state, and that they have more to show for it.

The present special session of the state legislature has voted in favor of an investigation of the state highway department. The house and senate both adopted resolutions. The senate's resolution was thrown out on a point of order, as an investigation of this sort was not mentioned in the governor's call for the session. The house refused to gig back. Governor McKelvie has intervened in favor of an investigation. Friends of Mr. Johnson say that the farther the investigation goes, the better it will look for him.

Under the resolution passed by the house, three members of that body were to make an investigation. Under Governor McKelvie's plan, the investigation will be made by the governor, the attorney general, the state auditor and two representatives from each branch of the legislature. With this sort of a committee, it ought to be possible to prevent any unfavorable findings being made. Mr. Johnson had expressed himself as anxious for a probe, provided it included county as well as state expenditures. He kindly offered to pay half the cost of an investigation from funds at his disposal.

Republican newspapers are saying that the attack against Johnson and his department is political, and remind the democrats that the state engineer served under democratic administrations. Other friends of Mr. Johnson declare that if the counties are allowed to spend the federal highway funds, chaos will result, and there will be no connected system of roads in the state. To this it may be answered that if it is to cost \$4,000 a mile to build a state road, it would be better to have several hundred miles of usable county-constructed roads than seven miles of high-priced road that is no better. The tourists and others who desire through roads would as soon travel over well built county roads as small strips of state roads. If the counties build roads as cheaply as they have been building them, and have at their disposal the money now spent for constructing the higher-priced roads, they can soon have enough of them so that it will be pretty hard not to find through routes in all directions.

THE EX-SOLDIER AND CRIME.

County Judge Tash hits the nail on the head about as often as any Alliance man. A week or two ago, in a talk to the delegates at the W. C. T. U. regional conference, the judge, who is a good friend of all ex-soldiers, made the point that the crime waves which are found in various parts of the country, in ever increasing numbers, are not traceable to the ex-soldiers. Judge Tash, whose position gives him a more intimate knowledge of crime and criminals than the average man, has made an investigation of local conditions, as well as a somewhat larger survey, and has come to the conclusion that the present day law violators, for the most part, are the youths who were under the draft age back in 1917, when the United States got into the war in earnest.

The Box Butte county official does not deny that there has been a great increase in the number of law violators, or the number of laws that may be violated, for that matter. But he has discovered that the majority of bootleggers, bank robbers, holdups and hoboes are young fellows who are now between nineteen and twenty-two. He

figures it out that four years ago, these same boys were fifteen and eighteen, and that although there were some youths of this age who saw service, the number was comparatively small. The youths who are the principal offenders these days were the lads who stayed at home during the war and took the jobs of their older brothers. They drew unprecedented wages. A youth driving a delivery wagon would make \$100 a month. Those who entered the employ of the railroads drew much higher salaries. Clerks in business houses wouldn't except anything but the big-paying positions.

The result, according to the Judge Tash, was logical and almost inevitable. These young fellows were the boys who purchased silk shirts and bought out the barber shops. They invested in diamonds and automobiles. The money came easily, and out of all proportion to their expectations, and it was spent with the same ease with which it came.

The ending of the war and the return of the soldiers put an end to the easy money for the youthful laborers. The ex-soldiers went back to the jobs—at least those with valuable experience did—and the first ones to be laid off were the boys. They had developed expensive tastes, and the end of the high wages made it necessary for them to seek other means to gratify them. To some of them bootlegging and other forms of law-violation offered the easiest way. This, in Judge Tash's opinion, explains the age of the criminals, as well as the crime wave. It also vindicates the ex-soldiers, who, probably, had better reason to go into crime than their more fortunate brothers.

The fact is, however, that the ex-soldiers, as a class, having given much to their country, are not the ones who are helpful to tear it down. There are a few of the weaker ones, of course, who have turned to crime when faced with unemployment and a different sort of a reception than they had expected, but only a few. Judge Tash's views have received confirmation from an investigation carried on by the American Legion, which is making a fight to keep newspapers from unduly emphasizing the arrest and conviction of ex-service men. The public, largely because the newspapers have played up the few ex-soldiers who have gone wrong, has gained the opinion that the men who saw service are largely responsible for crime waves.

Dr. F. L. Christian, superintendent of two of New York state's largest reformatories, has made an investigation of prison records for his institutions. He finds that out of a total of 1,900 received, but 318, or one-sixth, were ex-soldiers. Inasmuch as one out of every five men in the country were drafted into the army, the proportion shows up well for the ex-soldiers. More than half of the 318 had been arrested and convicted at least once before they entered the service. These men were picked up while the discharged men were sifting about, looking for a place in civilian life, and during the past six months the ex-soldiers have made an even better record.

The figures show that only 43 were arrested for robbery and carrying of concealed weapons, and but a few for sex crimes. Summing up Dr. Christian's testimony, it is seen that most ex-service men now serving sentences were criminals before they joined the army; that had the examinations of draftees been sufficiently strict, many of these men would never have got into the service; that that, although the crime wave is still at its height, the number of ex-soldier convictions is getting smaller and smaller. The case, as the American Legion remarks, may now go to the jury.

OPINIONS WILL VARY.

(Lincoln Star.) The average reader can run a newspaper better than a newspaperman just as the average citizen feels that he knows how to run a grocery store better than the grocer or operate the railroads better than the railway officials. Bill Jones wonder why a newspaper fills up its columns with society news and Miss Tanglefoot thinks all "that stilly stuff" about congress hopeless. Newspapers and what they should publish have long been a puzzle to the layman, but a class of budding journalists at Columbia university has reduced the question to cold figures. A vote was taken and the result is interesting to the newspaper fraternity as well as to the readers.

Four prefer to read scandal, while twenty dislike it. (The four were probably more honest about it than the others.) Twenty-nine prefer politics and three find such news objectionable to newspaper columns. Twenty-five like news from foreign lands, while three do not; sports are read by fourteen students and four would as soon see the sport page omitted from the paper; eight delight in criminal news, sixteen deplore it; economic news is a favorite by eight to two; finance takes the short end of a four to thirteen vote and social news as read by four and scorned by nine.

When embryo newspaper men disagree as to what is news, it is not to wonder that there are all kinds of newspapers. Most newspapers attempt to give something which will appeal to readers of all tastes, and so, if the reader finds something which does not appeal to him, he may at least be as-

ured that somewhere there is someone very much interested in that very thing, and possibly that someone does not care for the particular thing he likes.

THE TWO HENS.

(Robert Quillen in The Fellowship Forum.)

In a certain barnyard there lived two hens—a temperamental Leghorn with jumpy nerves and a habit of telling her troubles to the world, and a placid Wyandotte, possessed of a gentle voice and a conviction that trivialities seldom matter.

Each of the hens nursed an ambition to incubate a setting of eggs and mother a hatching of chicks.

The Leghorn, being convinced that all men are crooked, hid her nest under the barn. The Wyandotte, being a natural born conservative and convinced that this is a very decent old world, announced her desire to set and was intrusted with fifteen choice eggs and a straw-filled nest in the hen house.

In the course of time the eggs hatched, and both hens appeared in the barnyard with their broods.

Now the Leghorn habitually laid more eggs than the Wyandotte, but this didn't get her anything, for somebody else got the eggs. Her egg capacity had nothing to do with her ambition to raise a family.

The owner observed, also, that the Leghorn was given to wild alarms; that she was forever complaining and squalling at the top of her voice when approached by a harmless neighbor. He observed that she led her chicks afield in the dewy grass and lacked both poise and common sense. And he said to his wife: "I shall take that darned fool Leghorn's chicks away from her and give them to the Wyandotte. She can't stand responsibility."

The moral is that one who saws wood and doesn't lose his head will get there with both feet, while the individual who permits every trivial thing to get his goat will get the air.

CHURCH ADVERTISING.

(Denver News.)

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"The men who stand foremost in American business annals have been invariably religious, churchmen, worshippers at God's footstool. Because of their beliefs in God they have brought into business humane methods. They are using their stewardships for the uplift of men and that is practical religion. The tragedies in business life

come from the lack of religion, failure to recognize God and His teachings. If men and women who have lost faith in God and His infinite mercy can be brought within the fold through the good work of publicity, so much the better for society. It is a fulfillment of the Divine purpose. Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, the maimed and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the Lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. "No exclusiveness there."

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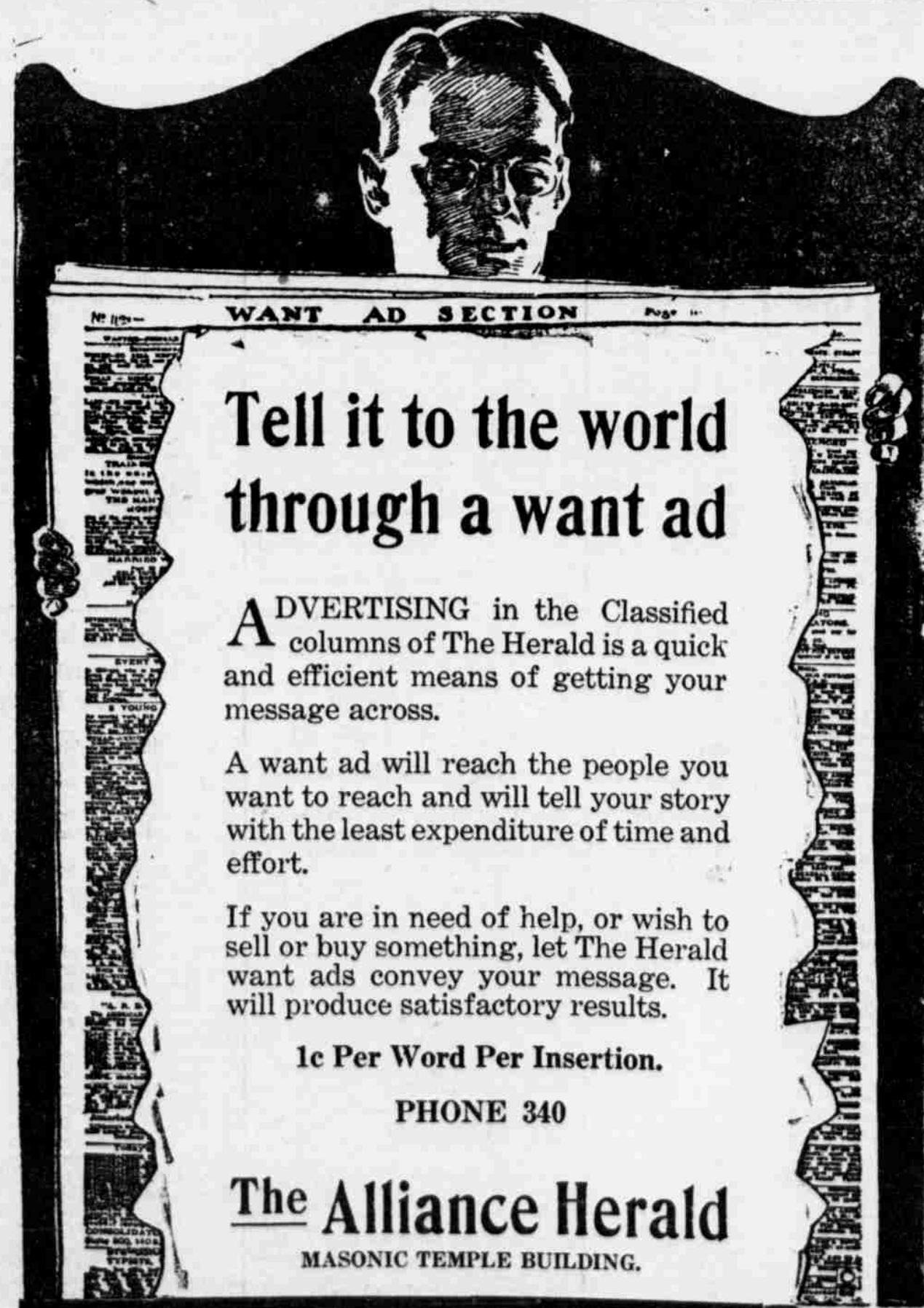
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